



To: The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

Date: May 24, 2024

Re: Draft Rule 5123-2-03 - Quality Assurance

On behalf of the Ohio Provider Resource Association, The Arc of Ohio, APSI Ohio, Autism Society Ohio, and ElevateDD, below are comments on Draft Rule 5123-2-03 - Quality Assurance. We appreciate the opportunity to offer our thoughts on this crucial matter.

Quality assurance generally involves establishing processes, procedures, and metrics to monitor, evaluate, and continuously improve the quality of services, ensuring they meet regulatory requirements as well as customer satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. We believe this rule presents a **significant opportunity** to facilitate a more robust conversation around quality within our system and to establish a meaningful quality assurance (QA) framework developed in collaboration with stakeholders.

Upon review of the proposed rule, it appears there are no significant changes from previous versions, only updates to citations. Rather than moving forward with filing, OPRA asks the Department to **establish a stakeholder group** to collaboratively review and enhance the Quality Assurance Rule or add a date certain in rule by which such a group shall be established.

This stakeholder group should include representatives from provider organizations, county boards, advocacy groups, individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, and other relevant stakeholders. By engaging diverse perspectives and expertise, we can develop a more comprehensive and effective QA framework that meets the needs of all stakeholders.

Under the current system, DODD appears to be measuring quality based on:

- Rights
- Self-determination
- Physical well-being
- Emotional well-being
- Material well-being
- Personal development
- Interpersonal relationships
- Social inclusion

Not on the list are things like access and rebalancing – specifically called out by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare as part of their HCBS Quality Measure Set, for example.

The rule indicates processes the department employs to achieve quality outcomes, the majority of which are focused on compliance:

- Compliance reviews
- County Board accreditation
- MUIs/UIs
- Service and Support Administration
- Provider Certification
- Employment First
- Behavioral Support
- Personal Funds
- Licensed Residential Facilities
- Performance of Health-Related Activities/Med Admin

While compliance is an aspect of quality, it is not the only one. Nothing on this list would let us know, at the system level: individual or family experience with the eligibility process; number of people engaged in self-direction; timelines for eligibility determination, waiver enrollment, or service delivery; disparities in access.

Further, nothing in this rule indicates how this information is used to address or improve quality at the system level, how stakeholders are engaged, or how the information is made available.

We urge DODD to **adopt a stakeholder-informed QA approach that more closely aligns with national quality assurance standards and measures for system performance, including those issued by CMS.**

A meaningful QA program has the potential to enhance the quality of services and supports provided to individuals with developmental disabilities, improve outcomes, and promote accountability and transparency within the system. We believe that by working collaboratively, we can develop a QA framework that reflects best practices, meets regulatory requirements, and most importantly, enhances the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Thank you for considering our comments on this important matter. We are available to discuss these suggestions further and to provide any additional information or assistance as needed.